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Editorials -

Stand for Peace

Sen. George McGovern (D., S. D.) and a small handful of colleagues have taken a courageous stand for a negotiated settlement of the war in South Viet Nam. They are bucking the Johnson Administration policy, which has been given strong support by leading Republican Congressmen. The prevailing view is that the United States cannot and will not pull out of the turmoil in Southeast Asia, that if a stable South Viet Nam government can be established, the military operations against the Communist Viet Cong will succeed.

Sen. McGovern early this week outlined what he called his "minimum terms" for a settlement in a talk at the University of South Dakota. He called for: Closer confederation between North and South Viet Nam, with local autonomy; economic ties and railroad links between the two nations; U. S. financial aid in developing the Mekong River Basin; neutralization of both countries, withdrawal on both sides of outside troops and advisers, and no effort made to dictate political ideology; establishment of a U. N. commission to guarantee national borders, provide police protection, and guarantee fair treatment for tribal groups.

The United States effort in South Viet Nam has been discouraging ever since President Eisenhower permitted Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, the late, great advocate of brinkmanship, and the CIA, under his brother, Alan, to intervene through the back door. As the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* observed recently, it will be Eisenhower "who will be charged by

history with the initial responsibility for our Viet Nam military adventure, wherever it may lead."

President Johnson has made the decision that we must remain involved in the conflict, indeed, we must pursue the enemy with more vigor, and carry out reprisals for attacks allegedly engineered by North Viet Nam. He could hardly do otherwise in view of the steps initiated in the Eisenhower Administration and continued under President Kennedy. Any sudden reverse—a quick withdrawal—could not but lose face for the U. S. Those concerned about the possibility of an escalation into a large-scale war, however, are rightfully wondering what the final goal of our Southeast Asia policy is. We cannot maintain the status quo indefinitely; we cannot risk World War III by going all out for a military victory, even though we have the strength to do so.

The only sane solution, it seems, is a gradual disengagement from the military operations. That is what Sen. McGovern and his small group are proposing—encouraging negotiations or mediation looking toward military neutralization. It can be accomplished over a period of time and bring honor, not dishonor, to the United States. President Eisenhower negotiated a settlement in Korea after he took office. It was neither a victory nor a defeat for us. Korea remains split as Viet Nam is now, and a U. N. commission patrols the buffer zone between North and South. The same course of action today is as valid today as it was in 1953, and McGovern's group rates public encouragement for their pursuit of a peaceful and honorable settlement.